

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 16, 18, 19, and 21 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 16, and 19 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., FIGS. 2-3 of the subject application; page 11, lines 12-14; page 14, lines 15-25; page 15, line 10 to page 18, line 23; and page 19, line 10 to page 21, line 17).

As amended, independent claim 1 recites a server including "associated information storing means for storing associated information in which unprocessed document information and fingerprint information are associated with each other," where the associated information in the server and a scanner are collated, followed by collating fingerprint information in the terminal apparatus and the scanner, in order to confirm that document image information read by the scanner is stored in the server in an unprocessed document image (*see also* claims 16 and 19, for example, as described on page 20, lines 4-16 of the specification).

In other words, according to the Applicant's claimed invention, even when a document is read by a scanner connected to a network, the document is collated with unprocessed document image information stored in a server, enabling judgment as to whether a third person other than an authorized user is attempting to copy the document, in order to prevent data theft (see, e.g., specification at page 20, line 18 to page 21, line 17).

Claims 19-21 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication 2001-045192 ("the '192 publication") in view of U.S. Patent 6,463,474 to Fuh et al. ("Fuh"). Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '192 publication in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2001/0016912 to Takahashi, and further in view of Fuh.¹ These rejections are respectfully traversed.

¹ On page 4 of the Office Action of 08/29/2008, only the '192 publication and Takahashi are listed as being part of the rejection. However, in the detailed rejections on pages 6-11, for example, the Fuh reference is described. Thus, it is believed that Fuh was intended to be included in this rejection.

The proposed combinations of the '192 publication in view of Takahashi and/or Fuh do not teach or suggest an image processing system having the above claimed structure and function such that it is possible to confirm whether or not document image information obtained after being read by a scanner is registered in advance in a server as document image information to be processed, which takes place prior to a fingerprint collation process between a terminal apparatus and the scanner.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the proposed combinations of the '192 publication in view of Takahashi and/or Fuh do not teach or suggest the Applicant's claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 1, 16, and 19, and dependent claims 2, 5, 7, 18, and 21 are patentable over the proposed combination.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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